

We love our children very much and everything that we have done has been to have them grow up as upright outstanding people. In January 2006 we found out that our daughter had been drinking with her cheerleading friends at sleepovers. She was diagnosed with depression and anxiety. She was hospitalized for alcohol poisoning and an overdose of Tylenol tablets, and spent 3 days at the Institute of Living. She was released early because we agreed to take her to the Rushford Center and she agreed that she would let us know when she was feeling anxious or depressed. She attended Rushford Center every week for 9 months. She also was going to a psychiatrist every week. The pediatrician was also seeing her every month. In March 2007 we started Family counseling because we felt that maybe that would be more beneficial than individual counseling.

In January 2007 she was arrested for shoplifting and in May of 2007 she was arrested for threatening her brother with a knife. She was very hostile towards the family and threatening. We had to put locks on our bedroom doors because she said she would kill us in our sleep.

When DCF became involved we thought that they would help our family but instead they tore it apart. They helped alienate our daughter from us and mislead us every step of the way. Here is a 16 year old that stole from her parents, grandparents and neighbors. She drank, took drugs, defecated in a plastic basin in our home and left it on the banister and also urinated in a plastic bag in the basement. Her grades deteriorated, she killed her brothers' fish on his birthday. She forged notes at school and lied to the teachers. She is a great manipulator and when people catch on to her tricks she moves on. DCF didn't think that anything was wrong with any of her behavior.

We wanted our daughter to go stay with my sister but DCF said that there was a case against her in their office. The supervisor talked to my sister at a meeting at my home and realized and told her that it was a case of mistaken identity with another family,

which took months to correct until my sister threatened libel.

What kind of background checks do they run?

When the family that my daughter was staying with went out of town for 5 days they allowed her to stay at a neighbor's home without completing a background check on the neighbors. For her to stay with my parents for one day, we were told that a background check on them was necessary. Where is the consistency in the rules that they abide by?

DCF stopped family therapy after 3 sessions. They told us they saw that her behavior was bizarre and that she needed help but they never gave her any help. They told us they were going to file for a child with special needs that can't be cared for in the home but they filed for everything but that. That was a ploy on their part to make sure that we signed her over. They essentially black mailed us in to signing her over to the department.

In March 2007 they set up a meeting under false pretenses indicating it was to reunite the family when in fact it wasn't that at all as the therapist from Wheeler Clinic was never told that the goal was family reunification.

The first foster family that she was with requested that she be removed because "they couldn't tolerate her behavior". We were not told she was moved to another home in a different town. The DCF social worker, my daughter and the foster mother called the police in her new town to report that my husband was parked outside their home, when in fact we had no idea she had been moved. This is another false accusation from the department among many.

The only way that DCF has helped my daughter is to place her in a home where she can continue drinking alcohol, take illegal drugs and smoke cigarettes, which the foster mother provides for her.

They also have demonstrated to her by their actions toward us that her behavior is appropriate. What a great example for youths to be in a system where the people that are supposed to help them are just as manipulative as the children.

Throughout this whole ordeal we feel they have lied to us and given us false hopes about reunification.

Our daughter is a disturbed, out of control girl as demonstrated by her behavior in our home and the homes she has been placed in. She desperately needs psychological and emotional help which DCF has failed to provide.

It is amazing that this agency has different sets of standards for biological/adopted parents and foster parents. It seems that the DCF foster parents can do no wrong.

The emotional abuse that we have had to endure from this agency is totally reprehensible and the people that allow this kind of treatment to go on should be ashamed of themselves. There should be some sort of accountability or reprimands.

Maria and Seb Zappulla